

Museo de las Casas Reales

The **Museo de las Casas Reales** (English: *Museum of the Royal Houses*) is one of the important cultural monuments built during the colonial era in Hispaniola, now the Dominican Republic. It is located in the Colonial district of Santo Domingo.

It was the Palace of the Viceroy of Santo Domingo and it is the first (oldest) headquarters of Spanish power in the New World.^[2]

The building dates back to the sixteenth century, and was built to house the administrative offices of the Spanish colonies in the Americas, at the time any trespassers would be sentenced to death.

It is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site called Colonial City of Santo Domingo.

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History

The palace was built by orders of the Spanish Crown, represented by King Ferdinand II of Aragon, on October 5 of 1511 to house the main government offices of the colony in two interconnected buildings (hence the plural Casas Reales). In the first (South) section was the Royal Audiencia, the first court of the New World, as well as the office of the Comptroller General. The second (North) section was used by the successive Viceroys, Governors and Captains-General.

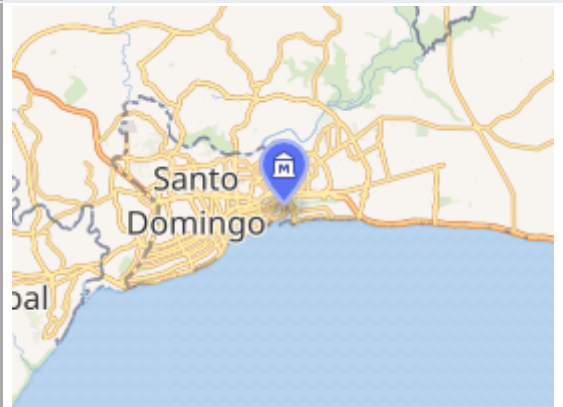
The original architectural structure has undergone a number of changes through the country's history. In 1807, during the period of French sovereignty over the Eastern part of Hispaniola, French general Louis Ferrand gave the facade a classical architectural style. During the last year of government of President Carlos Felipe Morales, some changes were made to use the building as the Governmental Palace. The Presidency later moved to a mansion on the site of today's Palacio Nacional. During the government of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo other modifications were made in order to house government offices. Trujillo's office, and an extensive collection of arms and armor that he purchased, remain on display.

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Facade of the Museo de las Casas Reales in the Colonial district of Santo Domingo



Established	1973
Location	Santo Domingo, <div> Dominican Republic</div>
Coordinates	18.475883°N 69.883208°W﻿ / ﻿
Type	Historical and Cultural
Director	Ana Yee de Cury ^[1]
Website	educando.edu.do (http://www.educando.edu.do/sitios-recomendados/museos-y-monumentos/museos/museo-de-las-casas-reales)

The building was later restored to its original 16th-century appearance and was established on October 18, 1973, during the administration of President Joaquín Balaguer,^[3] as a museum to highlight the history, life and customs of the inhabitants of the Spanish colony. However, it was not officially opened until May 31, 1976. Attending the opening ceremony was King Juan Carlos I of Spain. A self-guided tour giving a sequential history of the island includes a portable audio speaker that is available in various languages. It is currently one of the most visited sites in Santo Domingo.



Old colonial cannons in the Museo de las Casas Reales

Museum Rooms

- Comptroller-General
- Legislation
- Secretaries of the Audiencia
- Office of the Chief Judge
- Waiting Hall
- Chamber of the Chief Judge
- Vestibule of the Captain
- Office of the Captain General
- Family Life
- Historical Ceramics
- Military I
- Military II
- Great Hall of the Governors

See also

- Ciudad Colonial (Santo Domingo)
- Captaincy General of Santo Domingo
- Royal Audiencia of Santo Domingo
- History of the Dominican Republic

References

1. "Museo de las Casas Reales" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110716093211/http://www.cultura.gov.do/dependencias/museos/museodelascasasreales.htm>) (in Spanish). cultura.gov.do. Archived from the original (<http://www.cultura.gov.do/dependencias/museos/museodelascasasreales.htm>) on 16 July 2011. Retrieved 29 April 2011.
2. "Colonial City of Santo Domingo. Outstanding Universal Value" (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/526>). *UNESCO World Heritage Centre website*.
3. "UNESCO Document for creation of museum" (http://www.unesco.org/culture/natlaws/media/pdf/dominicanrepublic/repdom_legislacion_museo_casas_reales_spaorof.pdf) (PDF) (in Spanish). UNESCO.org. Retrieved 29 April 2011.

External links

- [Ministerio De Educación \(http://www.educando.edu.do/sitios-recomendados/museos-y-monumentos/museos/museo-de-las-casas-reales\)](http://www.educando.edu.do/sitios-recomendados/museos-y-monumentos/museos/museo-de-las-casas-reales)
 - [Viajar \(https://web.archive.org/web/20110719133639/http://www.viajar.com.do/museo-de-las-casas-reales/\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20110719133639/http://www.viajar.com.do/museo-de-las-casas-reales/)
 - [Santo Domingo \(http://www.santodomingo.com.es/2008/01/museo-de-las-casas-reales.html\)](http://www.santodomingo.com.es/2008/01/museo-de-las-casas-reales.html)
 - [Historia Dominicana \(https://web.archive.org/web/20080421170138/http://historiadominicana.wordpress.com/2008/04/13/edificios-coloniales-museo-de-las-casa-reales\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20080421170138/http://historiadominicana.wordpress.com/2008/04/13/edificios-coloniales-museo-de-las-casa-reales)
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